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reach many who should use the branch but who, attracted by the prestige of the general collection, come there only to be disappointed. Where all departments are together they reinforce each other, and every well-rendered service in one part calls attention to the possibilities of service in every other part. . . .

Of course I recognize that where the central library is at a great distance from the business center of the city a separate business branch may be justified despite its disadvantages, but a central library which, though not centrally located, is yet within the down-town district, will serve business men better than could a business branch,

even though located much more advantageously, except at the cost of practically complete duplication, which would result in an expense no library could justify. Further items of expense are: the cost of the branch, or its equivalent, rental, upkeep, and a staff larger than needed for the undivided work. . . .

The maximum of efficiency will result from a concentration or centralization of collections, catalogs and staff. Thus is insured directness and definiteness of service and a certainty that every borrower will get all the service that the library has to give.

THE CONSERVATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS: A PROBLEM IN REQUIRED READING

By W. E. HENRY, *Librarian, University of Washington, Seattle*

The old problem of the old library was the preservation of its materials frequently to the point of almost preventing their use. A new problem of the new library, and more specifically the college and university library, is the conservation of materials that should and must be used.

Etymologically considered there seems to be no essential difference between preservation and conservation, but in our recent popular use the words are fairly distinct in the minds of many, and suggest almost opposite meanings. Preservation carries with it the suggestion of preventing use, or special preparation for future use. Conservation connotes not the lack of use but rather the careful and economic and rational present use in such form or degree as shall husband the material, as shall not destroy it, as shall retain it for future use. The old library preserved, the modern library must conserve. . . .

We have for some time been familiar with the theory of conservation as applied to our forests, our mines, our water power, but it is so recent that we have begun to think of the needs and rights of future generations that everyone who considers this question with me well knows the chief facts concerning the vigorous, uncomprom-

ising, and yet unfinished fight in national and state governments for the protection of the rights of the next and following generations to a participation in the use of what nature has provided in what we choose to call natural resources. . . .

Conserve, make permanent, guard the future, protect the interests of those who are not here to protect their interests: all these have come to be partial definitions of the word conservation.

With the very instinct of the librarian, the preservation of all good things, one would scarcely think that there should ever be any necessity for emphasis upon conservation. However, there is a real problem of conservation arising in many libraries, and especially in our college and university libraries, that is pressing hard upon us, and, so far as I know, no solution has been offered or even publicly considered.

It is not a problem of the first magnitude in library administration, but it is a vital one within its scope. It is the problem that has come with our modern conceptions of college teaching, with our pedagogy, if you please. It is a backward extension of our modern and rapid extension of graduate teaching and study.

There was a time when the fact that a statement of fact or opinion was in print made it authoritative, and no questions of veracity were asked, and no serious consideration was taken as between questions of authority growing out of investigations and questions of opinion that were based upon no other consideration than that someone had funds sufficient to pay the printer. . . .

We are now in a new educational world with new conceptions of education and new conceptions of study and class management. Now we have the lecture, the note-book, and the assigned reading. Any college teacher of whatever rank or preparation will presume to lecture upon almost any topic if he has read not less than two text-books and one article from an encyclopedia upon the subject. He expresses himself in much poorer form than can be found in almost any book that has been written upon the subject; the student, instead of really thinking what the professor is saying and what he means by what he says, is on the verge of writer's cramp and paralysis trying to take in his note-book in a still poorer form what the Professor is so badly expressing. Then this student spends his time at home, rewriting his notes while he should be either reading or thinking upon the subject under consideration, a duty for which he has had but little time and less preparation.

Then, in order to compensate in some way for the poor lecture and worse notes, he has taken, he must read five hundred more or less pages per month, so rapidly and so disconnectedly that sometimes perhaps he never sees the relation between what he is reading and the course he is taking for which he wishes credit. The chief purpose of the note book and the required reading are to impress upon the dent that he has, in the vocabulary of the University, a "stiff" course, and that the professor is no "snap."

With the "assigned reading" comes our little problem of conservation of materials and if I may not be taken too literally, I should say the conservation of source ma-

terials. This title would not be far wrong, but I hesitate to use it lest it be interpreted too literally, and should appear to be attempting more than I really had in mind to do.

With the lecture, the note-book, and the assigned reading grew the idea that each student, even to the freshmen, must make the nearest approach to an original investigator and make first hand researches. The students in a very small high school, twenty miles from a library, informed me that the history work in that school was original research. They did not understand, but they used the language of an elder.

In this effort for the so-called research the faculty has selected the assigned readings in many cases from the nearest approach that the given library possesses to first hand sources. It is not bad that students know of such source materials; it is well to have some mention or (if no more) a brief digest of this material for even elementary work, but our problem of conservation comes in the library when a class of from fifty to one hundred and fifty careless students are required to read an expensive and out-of-print book, or certain chapters in it.

Mind you, the wholesale reading of rare and expensive materials is done very largely by students who care little or nothing for the facts they obtain or for the care of the literature. The chief concern of most of them ends with examination day.

Many of our professors are as thoughtless of the future use of the materials and of the welfare of future generations of students and for the integrity of the library materials, as are the great logging companies of the integrity of the forests, or the lumber interests of future generations.

The moment a reading is assigned to a large class some overthoughtful and industrious student, whose penetrating intellect fastens itself upon the vital words and most important sentences of the text, and whose generous spirit dictates that he should do some thinking for others, be-

gins to underscore all these words and sentences.

This penciling is usually done with a soft blurring pencil that penetrates the soft rough surface of book paper and cannot be erased. Sometimes the student who has gone far enough to appreciate and value the real permanency of records will discard so temporary a makeshift as a pencil and use ink both for underscoring and the occasional marginal note which he is willing to contribute lest some future reader or a member of his own class may be too dull to catch the points of vital significance.

The wearing out or the mutilation of an isolated book is serious enough, but it is of slight concern in comparison with a volume of a long run of periodicals, and this is the thing that is most likely to occur. The article in a high class scholarly periodical is usually much better material for assigned readings than are the books that are less condensed, less direct and less up to date in both conception and treatment of the subject. . . .

We can go to our shelves of economic journals or to our philosophic journals where a hundred and fifty students have read the latest on "trusts and combines," or the "seven men who control the wealth of the United States," the "taxation of intangible property," the "problems of market distribution," or the "democratic idea of a god" in Hibbert's, or in educational journals, where like numbers must know what Stanley Hall said about adolescence or what Professor Blank knows about child study and in these behold awful examples of the needs of conservation. . . .

It does not at first thought seem very serious that a dozen or twenty pages be destroyed out of a periodical containing fifty thousand pages, and perhaps this impression influences the students' thought, if he thinks, but all who have tried to replace a mutilated volume know the seriousness of it.

Not only do these readers mutilate by pencil or even ink, and by the excessive wear that comes from hundreds reading the

same selection but occasionally there comes a student who becomes so firmly attached to an article in a technical magazine that he finds he cannot separate himself from it, and since he can't stay with the beloved selection, he gently removes the much sought for article from the magazine and takes it with him. Our Volume I of the "Pedagogical Seminar" during the last session of our summer school fell into the hands of a high-school teacher, and an article of twenty pages was torn from the periodical; and a significant feature of this transaction is that the article was entitled, "Teaching Ethics in the High School." The humor of it alone makes the mutilation less difficult to bear. . . .

The question is not difficult to comprehend and its seriousness is readily appreciated. The cure or remedy is not so easily determined upon or so readily applied.

The first and perhaps the chief difficulty in remedying the defect is that the application does not lie within the realm of the librarian's jurisdiction. The difficulty lies in the modern schemes of instruction and any remedy that may be applied is likely to be applicable only by the professor, and if a remedy shall come by which the conservation of our almost source materials may be possible and our sets of valuable periodicals may be kept intact it will probably come through the changes made by the teaching force of the Universities, and they, up to this time, have not appreciated the problem, nor even that a problem exists.

We, as librarians, however, more clearly comprehending that the problem exists and that it is or may soon become a serious one, may legitimately busy ourselves in speculating upon the case and finding if possible a solution for our conservation problem.

If the solution is possible and a remedy for present errors may be found it is quite possible that our professors may be made to appreciate the situation and their co-operation secured to bring about such changes in practice as will solve the problem I am trying to present.

I think it fair to assume that the professors will not totally change nor very seriously modify their present plans of instruction. The so-called lecture method will not be abandoned, and the demand will persist that students, even down to the freshmen, shall have access to the secondary sources in the form, usually, of the latest and most important expert view as set forth in our great periodicals, which are the most precious possessions of most of our universities.

Our only hope then, it seems to me, is to devise some plan for the use of the materials that will make available to a large class the real essence of these best secondary sources, and yet prevent the actual handling of these periodicals by untrained and many times uninterested young students who do not to any degree appreciate the sacred value of what to them is little more than paper.

The nature of much of this material is such that it is quite impossible to purchase many copies, as can easily be done in the case of recent books, any one of which might be used as a text.

The periodicals could usually be bought in duplicate when first published, if we could know at that time that they are to be wanted, but generally many months have elapsed and sometimes years, before we are aware that a certain period or a given theory cannot be adequately studied unless all the members of a large class may each have unrestricted access to a given article in a bound magazine that can scarcely be duplicated or replaced.

I see at this time but two courses to even suggest that may help the situation. One is wholly in the hands of the professor, the other is to a degree within the control of the librarian if he may have advance warning of the call that is to be made and has available funds.

The first is that instead of each of a large class reading and penciling a valuable article in an expensive periodical, this article be assigned to one student rather than 150 and that he digest it thoroughly for the

class, and even furnish the members of the class with a brief of his digest by duplication.

The faculty objection to this scheme would probably be that it leaves one hundred and forty-nine students idle while one digests the material, for at times it seems they are more interested in the fact that the students work than that they secure results through their work. Having been a college teacher, I must think that many students can be employed at such work at one time, each on a separate assignment and the class as a whole get a much wider range than under present plans, and each receive large benefits from the intensive work of other members of the class.

The second possible plan, and one within the control of the librarian, is the duplication of the entire assigned article, by mimeograph or otherwise, so that many copies may be at the loan desk, that many readers may be accommodated at one time. This plan seems a rational solution, but in the course of a year, it will cost many dollars, and in one sense not increase the resources of the library.

A third mere possibility comes to my mind, but it is not in the control of either professor or librarian, and it is so far outside the limits of probability, if not of possibility that I hardly need mention it. It is the more generous preparation and publication of source books for different lines of study. These so-called source books would, of course, be digests of the best literature in a particular and restricted line. Unless, however, the courses were fairly uniform in many educational institutions, the market for such source books would not justify publication. Whether the courses and the materials could be sufficiently standardized to keep a source book in the market for a series of years, I do not know.

I know we must do something for the conservation of our best materials at whatever cost. I should like to know how the problem impresses other members of this section and what solutions you have to suggest.